



News from

Congressman Ron Kind

REPRESENTING WISCONSIN'S THIRD
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

1406 Longworth House Office Building • Washington, D.C. 20515 • (202) 225-5506

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Wednesday, May 23, 2007

Contact: Anne Lupardus
Phone: 202-225-5506

Rep. Kind Votes to Fight Record Gas Prices

Washington, D.C. – With summer driving season nearly upon us, U.S. Rep. Ron Kind this week voted to approve two bills that will provide new tools to fight record gas prices by working to stop price gouging and OPEC price fixing.

“Memorial Day starts a season of heavy driving, and western Wisconsin families cannot afford to keep getting squeezed at the pump while this Administration continues to ignore our need for a comprehensive energy strategy,” Rep. Kind said. “With prices where they are, the potential for price gouging is great, and these bills will finally give the federal government the authority it needs to prosecute those who are manipulating the price of gas.”

Families are paying an all-time record high of \$3.22 a gallon on average for regular gasoline – up 89 cents from the beginning of the year. Last year, families paid \$1,000 more on average for gasoline than in 2001, and each additional 10 cents per gallon of gasoline adds \$14 billion to America’s annual gasoline bill. All of this is happening at the same time the six largest oil companies announced \$30 billion in profits for the first quarter of 2007.

The Energy Price Gouging Prevention Act, H.R. 1252, would give the Federal Trade Commission the authority to investigate and punish companies that artificially inflate the price of energy. Individuals or companies that inflate prices during a national emergency or that otherwise charge unconscionably excessive prices would be subject to new criminal penalties, of up to \$150 million for corporations or up to \$2 million and 10 years in prison for individuals.

In addition, the “NOPEC” bill, H.R. 2264, would allow the Justice Department to take legal action against OPEC state-controlled entities that conspire to limit the supply, or fix the price, of oil. The U.S. is importing more than 770,000 barrels per day from Saudi Arabia and other OPEC countries, and American consumers remain at the mercy of OPEC nations in how much they pay to fill up their tanks.

“While the world energy trade can be quite complicated, one thing is clear – America is too dependent on foreign oil,” Rep. Kind said. “Families and businesses are facing a real hardship at the pump right now, and we are working to get to the root of the problem, exploring anticompetitive practices in the oil and gasoline industry, and putting teeth into our antitrust laws. Our dependence not only threatens our pocketbooks and summer vacations – it also threatens our national security.”

In January, the House also voted to roll back \$14 billion dollars in taxpayer subsidies for Big Oil companies – already enjoying record profits. That money will be reinvested here at home in clean, alternative fuels, renewable energy and energy efficiency.